

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 0076

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SUBJ: TIME MAGAZINE: SPIES IN THE LUXEMBOURG COLD?

REF: LUXEMBOURG A-45 OF NOVEMBER 20, 1975

1. TIME MAGAZINE CORESPONDENT GEORGE M. TABER APPROACHED EMBASSY JANUARY 20-21 CONCERNING ARTICLE HE PLANS TO WRITE ON SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN LUXEMBOURG. IN ADDITION TO GENERAL BACKGROUNDER AND ASSISTANCE IN CONTACTING SOURCES FOR INTERVIEWS, TABER SPECIFICALLY SOUGHT CONFIRMATION OF IMPRESSION HE SAID HE HAD GAINED AT HIS PARIS BUREAU OF SUBSTANTIAL COVERT ACTIVITIES BY SOVIETS IN LUXEMBOURG.

2. EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER ASSISTED TABER IN IDENTIFYING LUXEMBOURG AND SOVIET OFFICIALS WHOM HE COULD CONTACT TO SEEK INTERVIEWS AND OFFERED HIM BRIEFING ON PUBLICLY KNOWN ASPECTS OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES HERE INCLUDING EMBASSY, CULTURAL CENTER, AEROFLOT AND EAST-WEST UNITED BANK. EMBOFF CONCEDED THAT SOVIET REPRESENTATION IN LUXEMBOURG WAS UNUSUALLY HEAVY IN PROPORTION TO SIZE OF COUNTRY BUT DECLINED TO COMMENT ON ACCOUNTS TABER SAID HE HAD HEARD IN PARIS AND LUXEMBOURG CONCERNING SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES. EMB-OFF WAS ALSO UNABLE TO COMMENT ON QUESTIONS CONCERNING

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CIA REPRESENTATION WHICH TABER SAID WERE STIMULATED BY

RECENT ARTICLES IN LIBERATION AND OTHER JOURNALS.

3. FOR DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION, TABER MAY HAVE RECEIVED HIS IMPRESSION OF UNUSUAL SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN LUXEMBOURG FROM SHARP INCREASE IN SOVIET PRESENCE HERE IN 1974-75. AS REPORTED IN REFAIR, THREE OF THE FOUR MAJOR SOVIET INSTITUTIONS IN THE GRAND DUCHY ARE QUITE RECENT ADDITIONS. THE EAST-WEST UNITED BANK, THE AEROFLOT OFFICE, AND THE PUSHKIN CULTURAL CENTER WERE ALL ESTABLISHED BETWEEN JUNE 1974 AND JULY 1975. ALTHOUGH THE FORTUNES OF THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNIST PARTY HAVE BEEN FALLING DURING THIS PERIOD, THE SOVIET PROFILE INCREASED MARKEDLY. SOVIET CULTURAL AND PRESS PROGRAMS ARE BEING EXPANDED AND THE NUMBER OF RUSSIAN PERSONNEL ACCREDITED IN THE GRAND DUCHY IS INCREASING.

4. OUR ASSESSMENT OF THESE ACTIVITIES PLACES THE EMPHASIS ON THE SOVIETS' DESIRE TO INCREASE THEIR OVERALL INFLUENCE AND PROFILE HERE. HOWEVER, THE SHARPNESS OF THE INCREASE AND NATURE OF SOME OF THE NEW ACTIVITIES -- IN PARTICULAR THE INAUGURATION OF WEEKLY NONSTOP AEROFLOT PASSENGER SERVICE BETWEEN LUXEMBOURG AND MOSCOW BY VIRTUALLY EMPTY AIRCRAFT -- COULD ACCOUNT FOR IMPRESSION GIVEN TABER BY LUXEMBOURG SOURCES THAT SOVIETS ARE INCREASINGLY USING LUXEMBOURG AS WAY-STATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND LISTENING POST FOR COVERT ACTIVITIES INVOLVING THIRD COUNTRIES. PHILLIPS

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